SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 25.

THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

Isaiah 9:1-7.

Motto Text - "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6.

"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali." - They had thought the first affliction severe, but worse was in store for king and people. These two tribes inhabited what was aftewards known as upper and lower Galilee. "And afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations."-The country west of the sea of Galilee and east of the Jordan.

This prophecy which begins with written in the days of Ahaz, Isaiah prophesied in his home at Jerudarkest of all in the history of Israel. Ahaz was one of the worst of kings. Stanley says of his reign, "the worship of Moloch, the savage god of Ammon, was now established, not only on the heights of Olivet, but in the valley of Hinnonns on a spot known by the name of Tophet close under the walls of Jernsalem. There the brazen statue of the god was erected, with the furnace with in, or at his feet into which the children were thrown. (2 Kings 16). Superstitions appeared in every part of the country. Gold and silver statues glittered throughout Ju dah. Sothshyers, spirits, ghosts were consulted.

Not content with establishing the worst form of idolatry, Ahaz had soever that believeth on him shall the doors of temple shut up, thus have eternal life, The Son was scopping the sacrifices to God. the gift of God the unspeakable Isaiah dealt very faithfully with gitt. And the government shallbe this wicked king, entreating and upon his shoulders."-All things threatening, but all without avail Meanwhile the enemies of Judah were bearing down upon them Ahaz appealed to Assyria for help against Syria and Israel, and the Assyrians came only to prove, if anything a worse scourge to their allies than to their enemies. Rawlinson describes the troubles of Ju dah, 'Great multitudes were carried captive or were slain. in this deep affliction of the Jewish nation her old foes, moreover, rose up against her. The Edonites on the southeast and the Philistines on the southwest poured in their troops upon the devoted land and added to its calamities. The Philistines took permanent possession of the territory which they had over-run. occupying it and adding it to their dominion. Judah was indeed brought low and made naked. Her country was desolate, her cities were burned with fire, her landstrangers devoured in her presence; it was desolate and overthrown by strangers; The territory that remained to her was truly but a very small remnant, and even this was threatened."

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."- The prophet knew that his prophecy would be fulfilled to the last jot and title, and he speaks as if it had already came to pass. This is not unusual with the prophets. We learn from Matthew that the reference is primarily to the Galileans But the light shone also on all Ju dea, and shines to-day over all the earth. The tribes in Galilee were especially given to idolatry. They walked in the darkness of sin, it was end."-It is a most blessed promise. an habitual thing with them.

"They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death."-The dark- dience to their Saviour "Upon the ness is the shadow of death because throne of Davia."-He was a dedarkening of sight in the dying is a the great promises to David were prelude to the night of death. Such fulfilled. The Jews had the highest is the darkness of sin. How won-opinion of David, considering his

forgiveness of sin.

-The joy of victory over foes.

"For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder.' -The part of the yoke which rested on the back of the neck and the shoulders. Reference may be rather to the beating of the Israelites with rods when they were in Egypt "As in the days of Mid; ian,"-The Midianites had most greviously oppressed the children of Israel The victory of Gideon was a most decisive one, utterly overthrowing their power and freeing his nation.

"For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of lifc."the seventh chapter was probably Which means, according to the Hebrew, that the armor and instruments of war and the blood salem. The days were among the bespattered garments shall be burned up, and wars shall be e ded 'This is not so much a prophecy of conquest as of peace; a peace, how ever, which is not to be expected until the enemies of God are voercome, and therefore the prediction may be said to include both events, the final overthrow and the subsequent prevalence of universal peace."-Alexander.

> "For unto us a child is born. unto us a child is given."-The "for" shows that the destruction of war and the coming of peace is the result caused by the giving of this son. The "us" refers primarily to the prophet and his people. But, blessed be God, the Son is given to us Gentiles as well, so that who are committed unto the Son till the last enemy shall be conquered and his mediaocial kingdom be ended The government of the world is compared to a robe of office which rests upon the shoulders.

> "And his name shall be called Wonderful."-He, himself, as Gcd incarnate was wonderful -a wonder which all his redeemed shall study throughout eternity with ever increasing delight. His works of atonement is wonderful, is the greatest wonder of the universe. "Counsellor,"-Having infinite wisdom to counsel all, needing no coun el. "The mighty God"-Infinite wisdom is in the name Counsellor; infinite power in his also. The deity of our Lord is asserted as plainly here in the Old Testament as it is in the New. In him dwell al! the fullness of the Godhead. "The everlasting Father." - The Christ is one with the Father. There are three persons, but one God. Hes called Father here as the giver of all life, "He is so-called not merely as the possessor of eternity, but be cause he is leternally the tender, faithful and wise educator, nourisher and cherisher of his own people.

"The Prince of Peace,"- Not of earthly peace, he came not to send peace, but a sword, and a man's foes should be they of his own household. But he is the Prince of peace between a just and holy God and sinful man. How can a guilty creature have peace with his God? is the one important question for our lost race

"Of the increase of his government and peace there seall be no Souls shall be making peace with their God and yeilding loving obeit deals to perdition, just as the scendant of David, and in him all WARREN J. LYNCH, Gen. Pass. Agt.

brings showing a way to obtain the find their ideal surpassed in the reign of the Lord. "To order it and "Thou has multiplied the nation to establish it" -To order is to and not increased the joy."-The govern, and to establish it to make "not" is a mistake of the transla- it firm and enduring, never to be tors and should be omitted. "They overthrown, though the kings of joy before thee according to the joy the earth set themselves and the in harvest " - The joy of seeing the rulers take counsel together against fruit of their labors. Harvest was it. "With judgement and with jus. a most joyful time in all agricultu- tice from henceforth even torever. ral countries. The Feast of the The zeal of the Lord of hosts will Tabernacles in which the harvest perform teis."-God has not only was rejoiced over was the greatest decreed this, but his earnest affec-The Mighty God, The Everlasting testival of the Jews. "And as men tion is involved, How many and rejoice when they divide the spoils.' how great are the assurances which he has made to his people?

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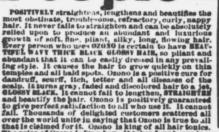
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